



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

necessities of existence, as weapons and huts and boats — we might anticipate that they would be something similar, else they would not serve the purpose everywhere in view ; but the analogies are, if anything, still more close and striking when we come to compare pure products of the fancy, creations of the imagination or the emotion, such as stories, myths, and motives of decorative art.

“ It has proved very difficult for the comparative mythologist or the folklorist of the old school to learn that the same stories, for instance, of the four rivers of Paradise, the flood, the ark, and the patriarch who is saved in it, arose independently in western Asia, in Mexico, and in South America, as well as in many intervening places, alike even in details, and yet neither borrowed one from another, nor yet drawn from a common source. But until he understands this, he has not caught up with the progress of ethnologic science.

“ So it is also with the motives of primitive art, be they symbolic or merely decorative. How many volumes have been written, tracing the migrations and connections of nations by the distribution of some art motive, say the *svastika*, the meander, or the cross ! And how little of value is left in all such speculations by the rigid analysis of primitive arts that we see in such works as Dr. Grosse’s ‘Anfänge der Kunst,’ or Dr. Haddon’s attractive monograph on the ‘Decorative Art of British New Guinea,’ published last year ! The latter sums up in these few and decisive words the result of such researches pursued on strictly inductive lines : ‘The same processes operate on the art of decoration, whatever the the subject, whatever the country, whenever the age.’ This is equally true of the myth and the folk-tale, of the symbol and the legend, of the religious ritual and the musical scale.”

THE SACRED POLE OF THE OMAHA TRIBE. — From a report of a paper read at the same meeting, by Miss Alice C. Fletcher, we copy the following : —

“ The sacred pole is of cottonwood, and bears marks of great age. Upon its head was tied a large scalp, and about three feet from the head of the pole is a piece of hide bound to it and covering a basket-work of twigs and feathers, in which were found nine scalps, and which is said to represent the body of a man. By the name given it, one would judge that the man thus symbolized was both a provider and a protector of his people. Besides the scalps, a pipe bowl of red catlinite, a stick used to clear it, a bundle of sinew cord, red paint for the pole, and a curious brush were found in the bundle. Those who visit the Peabody Museum will notice upon the upper portion of the sacred pole something that looks like pieces of bark ; but it is the dried paint that remains from the numerous anointings of the pole, which was a thank-offering for successful hunts, and a prayer for future prosperity.

“ According to the legend, the appointed time for the ceremony of anointing the pole was in the moon or month when the buffalo bellow, the latter part of July. Then a subdivision of the Honga gens, which had

charge of the pole, called the seven principal chiefs, who formed the oligarchy, to the sacred tent, to transact the preliminary business. When the council had agreed upon a day for the ceremony, the runners were sent out to search for a herd of buffalo ; and if one was found within four days, it was accounted a sacred herd. Each chief also chose a man of valorous exploits, who went from tent to tent selecting tent-poles, which were taken to the vicinity of the sacred tent, set up and covered so as to form a semi-circular lodge open towards the centre of the tribal circle. The sacred pole was brought forward, the pipe belonging to it was smoked by the occupants of the communal tent, and the bundle of reeds brought out. Each chief, as he withdrew a reed, mentioned the name of a man who was expected to furnish and send by the hands of his children the finest and fattest piece of buffalo meat. Should he refuse to make this offering to the pole, he would surely be struck by lightning, wounded in battle, or lose a limb by a splinter running into his foot.

"Gathering the meat occupied three days, and on the morning of the fourth day the meat was spread upon the ground before the pole. The keeper of the pole and his wife then performed their rites, every new act being accompanied by songs. After the meat was gathered up and laid away, four images were made in grass and hair, and set before the pole, which represented the enemies of the tribe. Then the warriors put on their ornaments and eagle-feathered bonnets, getting their weapons in order to simulate a battle before the pole. The warriors fired on the images, and the chiefs within the tent shot back in defiance of them. Four times the charge was made before the images were captured and treated as conquered. With this stirring drama the ceremonies came to an end. On the following day a dance about a pole took place, after which the camp broke up, and each hunted as he chose.

"The legend states that the finding of the pole occurred while a council was in progress among the Cheyennes, Arickaras, Pawnees, and Omahas, when terms of peace were being agreed upon and the rules of war and hunting decided. When the council was finished, an old man told the chiefs that his son had discovered a tree which stood burning in the night. So the people agreed to run a race for the tree, and to attack it as though it were an enemy. The young men stripped and painted themselves, put on their ornaments, and set out for the tree ; which was cut down, taken back by four warriors, and shaped till it was called a man, to whom offerings and requests should be brought, and who, the legend says, answered their prayers."

THE ORIGIN OF PLAYING-CARDS. — The "Springfield Republican," August 3d, contains an abstract of a paper of Mr. Stewart Culin on this subject.

"Mr. Culin stated that playing-cards may be traced directly to the practical arrows, bearing cosmical or personal marks, used by primitive man. The pack of cards in use to-day stands for the quiver of arrows with the emblems of the world quarters. The most primitive playing-cards of